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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference P-31609	FOR FURTHER ACTION		See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. PCT/JP99/03120	International filing date (day/month/year) 11/06/1999	Priority date (day/month/year) 12/06/1998	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC G11B23/087			
Applicant FUJI PHOTO FILM CO., LTD. et al.			
<p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of 10 sheets, including this cover sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of sheets.</p>			
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority III <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability IV <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited VII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application VIII <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application 			

Date of submission of the demand 07/01/2000	Date of completion of this report 01.09.2000
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized officer Schoon, P Telephone No. +49 89 2399 2673



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I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of (*substitute sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.*):

Description, pages:

1-110 as originally filed

Claims, No.:

1-28 as originally filed

Drawings, sheets:

1/51-51/51 as originally filed

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages:
 the claims, Nos.:
 the drawings, sheets:

3. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

III. Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability

The questions whether the claimed invention appears to be novel, to involve an inventive step (to be non-obvious), or to be industrially applicable have not been examined in respect of:

the entire international application.
 claims Nos. 9-11,21.

because:

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- the said international application, or the said claims Nos. relate to the following subject matter which does not require an international preliminary examination (*specify*):
- the description, claims or drawings (*indicate particular elements below*) or said claims Nos. are so unclear that no meaningful opinion could be formed (*specify*):
see separate sheet
- the claims, or said claims Nos. are so inadequately supported by the description that no meaningful opinion could be formed.
- no international search report has been established for the said claims Nos. .

IV. Lack of unity of invention

1. In response to the invitation to restrict or pay additional fees the applicant has:
 - restricted the claims.
 - paid additional fees.
 - paid additional fees under protest.
 - neither restricted nor paid additional fees.
2. This Authority found that the requirement of unity of invention is not complied and chose, according to Rule 68.1, not to invite the applicant to restrict or pay additional fees.
3. This Authority considers that the requirement of unity of invention in accordance with Rules 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 is
 - complied with.
 - not complied with for the following reasons:
see separate sheet
4. Consequently, the following parts of the international application were the subject of international preliminary examination in establishing this report:
 - all parts.
 - the parts relating to claims Nos. .

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V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes:	Claims 2-8,12-22,24-27
	No:	Claims 1,23,28
Inventive step (IS)	Yes:	Claims 2-8,12-22,24-27
	No:	Claims
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes:	Claims 1-28
	No:	Claims

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

see separate sheet

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

see separate sheet

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- 1). Reference is made to the following documents:

D1:US-A-5 596 464;
D2:EP-A-0 488 599;
D3:GB-A-2 055 756;
D4:DE-A-43 12 204;
D5:US-A-4 831 482;
D6:EP-A-0 189 257;
D7:US-A-4 680 660.

- 2). As to Section IV.

- 2.1 Claims 1-19 concern magnetic tape cassette comprising upper and lower half, two reels, a lid, a lid lock and a coil spring biasing the lid to its closed position. The special technical features relate to the detail that the spring is mounted in a loose fit manner on a support shaft and held in place by a position restrict means contacting an outer periphery of the coil.
- 2.2 Claim 20 concerns a magnetic tape cassette comprising upper and lower half, two reels and a lid. Its special technical features relate to the detail that the upper half includes two eaves portions each with a further extension portion, a screw boss, a gate mark and an increased thickness portion, the latter portions serving as a flow passage for the resin to the screw bosses when the upper cassette half is molded. These features have nothing to do with the features of claim 1. Thus, claim 20 constitutes a second separate invention not linked to claim 1 by a common inventive concept.
- 2.3 Claim 21 concerns a magnetic tape cassette comprising upper and lower half and two reels. Its special technical features relate the detail that the lower half further comprising tape height restricting ribs and means for restricting the push-in depth of the cassette. These features have nothing to do with those of either claim 1 or claim 20. Thus, claim 21 constitutes a third separate invention not linked to claim 1 or claim 20 by a common inventive concept.
- 2.4 Claim 22 concerns a magnetic tape cassette comprising upper and lower half,

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tape guide members and a lid consisting of an outer lid, an inner lid and a top lid. Its special technical features relate to the detail that the lower half comprises cam grooves in which slide pins mounted on the inner lid can slide. Furthermore, there is a pair of reference holes and a thickness reduced portion between the reference holes and the cam grooves. These features have nothing to do with any of claims 1, 20 and 21. Thus, claim 22 constitutes a fourth separate invention not linked to claims 1, 20 and 21.

- 2.5 Claims 23-25 concern a magnetic tape cassette with upper and lower half, each provided with bosses for assembling them. The special technical features relate to the detail that both the upper and lower bosses each include a front center and a rear center boss. These features have nothing to do with any of claims 1, 20, 21 and 22. Thus, claims 23-25 constitutes a fifth separate invention not linked to claims 1, 20, 21 and 22.
- 2.6 Claims 26 and 27 concern a tape reel for use in a tape cassette consisting of an upper and a lower reel part. The special technical features relate to the detail that the upper part has a plurality of welding boss holes and the lower part has a boss portion with a center portion, a side wall, a plurality of welding bosses and a plurality of ribs. These features have nothing to do with any of claims 1, 20, 21, 22 and 23-25. Thus claims 26 and 27 constitute a sixth separate invention not linked to claims 1, 20, 21, 22 and 23-25.
- 2.7 Finally, claim 28 concerns a magnetic tape cassette with upper and lower half and a lid. The special technical features relate to the detail that the lid comprises an inner lid with slide pins cooperating with a slide pin position restrict means when the lid is completely open. These features have nothing to do with any of claims 1, 20, 21, 22, 23-25, 26 and 27. Thus, claim 28 constitutes a seventh separate invention not linked to claims 1, 20, 21, 22, 23-25, 26 and 27.

3). As to Section V.

With respect to claim 1 D1 and D2 are the most relevant prior art documents and disclose a magnetic tape cassette consisting of upper and lower halves and accomodating a pair of reels. The cassette has an opening at the front end which is normally closed by a lid which is urged into the closed state by a spring. The lid

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is locked in its closed state by a lid lock which is also urged into the locked state by the same spring which urges the lid into its closed state.

It can easily be seen that this amounts to the same cassette defined in claim 1 so that claim 1 is not novel in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT.

- 4). Claim 2 adds the feature of the position restrict means preventing the inner periphery of the coil of the spring from touching the support shaft pin carrying the spring coil. The aim of this feature is preventing the "shaving" of the support shaft pin.

This feature is not known from D1 and also not known from or suggested in any of the other documents cited in the ISR. Thus claim 2 overcomes the objection of lack of novelty made to claim 1 and is also considered to involve an inventive step in the sense of Article 33(3) PCT.

- 5). Claims 3-8 and 12-19 are dependent claims defining advantageous embodiments and can also be considered to be novel and inventive.

Claims 9-11 will be discussed together with claim 21 in section VIII.

- 6). Independent claim 20 defines in particular the two increased thickness portions (103, see Figs. 28-30) formed on the eaves portions at the transition of the eaves portion to the extension portion on which the screw bosses are formed. The feature widens the mould gate and aims to overcome the problem of a possibly deformed screw boss caused by an insufficient resin flow upon moulding the upper cartridge half. This is the same subject matter as defined in claim 6, but in independent form.

Reference is made to D3 constituting the closest prior art on file. D3 discloses a tape cassette consisting of upper and lower half. The lower half has screw bosses with an extra rib formed on it serving the purpose of a stop shoulder for the upper half screw boss. Although the disclosure of D3 has some similarity with claims 6 and 20 it addresses a different problem and would not be contemplated by a skilled man seeking a solution for the problem as defined above.

Thus claim 20 can be considered to be novel and inventive in the sense of Articles 33(2) and (3) PCT.

- 7). Independent claim 22 defines in particular the "thickness reducing portions" (315,

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see Figs. 41-46) formed in the lower cassette half between the inner lid cam grooves and the reference holes for the tape position in the tape playing apparatus and aims to overcome the problem of the sink mark which can be formed on the increased thickness portion between the cam groove and the reference hole when the resin is cooled after moulding. This is the same subject matter as defined in claim 12, but in independent form.

Reference is made to D4 constituting the closest prior art on file. It discloses a cassette of the same kind as in claim 22. The wall portion near the cam groove is provided with a rib so that the wall portion in D4 has some similarity with that as defined in claim 22. However, the purpose of this rib is different and furthermore, the hollow cylinder part in Fig. 2 of D4 (no reference numeral) is not a reference hole but a screw boss. Thus, it cannot be said that in D4 the bottom surface of the portion of reduced thickness is higher than the upper surface of the reference hole. This means that in the first place claim 22 is formally novel over D4 and in the second place, in view of the fact that D4 addresses a different problem, that D4 would not be contemplated by a skilled man seeking to solve the sink mark problem as defined above. Thus, claim 22 is novel and inventive in the sense of Articles 33(2) and (3) PCT.

- 8). Independent claim 23 defines in particular the screw bosses formed at the rear and front center both in the upper cartridge half and in the lower cartridge half. It aims to overcome an orientation problem in the rotational direction when the two cassette halves are screwed together at the four corners and one central position (see page 23 of the description). This is the same subject matter as in claim 13, but in independent form.

Reference is made to D5 disclosing a tape cassette consisting of two halves screwed together at the four corners and at two center positions, one at the front and one at the rear. Thus, claim 23 is not novel over D5 in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT.

However, the feature of claim 14 defines a special embodiment of the screw bosses which is not known from D5. The "projection members 14" in D5 are not the same as the positioning ribs of claim 14. Thus, a claim including this feature would overcome the objection of lack of novelty over D5. Furthermore, since D5 addresses a different problem, (the members 14 in D5 are strengthening members) it would not be contemplated by a skilled man seeking to solve the

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positioning problem as defined above. A claim including this feature would be inventive over D5 in the sense of Article 33(3) PCT.

- 9). Claims 26 and 27 relate in particular to the reels accommodated in the tape cassette and concern the problem defined on page 30 of the description that part of the welding power (in case the upper and lower part of the reels are ultrasonically welded) can be spoiled into parts of the reels in the vicinity of the welding bosses (e.g. the ribs connecting the central boss of the reel with the tape receiving wall) when these parts are contacting the welding bosses. For that reason claim 26 defines that these ribs do not emanate from the welding bosses at all whilst claim 27 defines that these ribs have a gap to at least a part of the welding bosses. This subject matter is the same as in claims 15 and 16, but in independent form.

Reference is made to D6 disclosing a tape reel whereby the upper and lower parts are ultrasonically welded at three distinct locations. However, these welding points are integral with the surroundings so that, in terms of claims 26 and 27, part of the welding power is spoiled into the surrounding material. The problem of welding efficiency is not addressed in D5. Thus, claims 26 and 27 are novel and inventive over D5 in the sense of Articles 33(2) and (3) PCT.

- 10). Claim 28 relates to a position restrict means formed on the upper half of the cassette and aims to solve a positioning problem with respect to the inner lid upon assembly of the upper and lower cassette half. This subject matter is the same as in claim 17, but in independent form.

Reference is made to D7 disclosing a tape cassette whereby the upper cassette half contains "auxiliary guide ribs 22" against which the slide pins of the inner lid abut in the condition in which the lid assembly is completely open. These ribs prevent the inner lid from moving as long as the two cassette halves are not yet assembled and serve at the same time as guide helps for an easy fitting of the slide pins into the cam grooves. Since in claim 28 the position restrict means are only generally indicated claim 28 is not novel over D7 in the sense of Article 33(2) PCT.

The features of claim 18 define the position restrict means slightly more detailed and relates in particular to the embodiment of Fig. 66 of the application. However, as can be seen from Fig. 3 of D7, the position of rib 22 has the same effect. Thus,

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inclusion of these features into claim 28 would make the claim formally novel but not inventive over D7 in the sense of Article 33(3) PCT.

Since the features of claim 19 are not disclosed in any of the documents on file a claim including these features would overcome the objection as to lack of novelty of claim 28 and would at the same time involve an inventive step in the sense of Article 33(3) PCT.

11). As to Section VII.

The application contains a reference to a "sixth problem" (page 24, line 7 to page 27, line 15 and Figs. 15-18). This problem is solved by a "sixth aspect of the invention" (page 46, line 28 to page 48, line 4) and described in detail from page 84, line 30 to page 87, line 9 with reference to Figs. 51-53. However, no claims are directed to this aspect. The above passages and Figures should be deleted.

11). As to Sections III and VIII.

Claims 21 and 9-11 are unclear. These claims relate directly to the embodiment of Figs. 31-40 and the problem to be overcome in this embodiment is explained with reference to Fig. 7. Comparing Fig. 7 with Fig. 31, it is clear that the parts with reference numerals 253a and 253b in Fig. 7 exactly correspond to the parts with reference numerals 205a and 205b in Fig. 31. However, parts 253a and 253b in Fig. 7 are presented as "means restricting the push-in depth of the cassette" into the playing apparatus, since it is these parts that are brought into contact with stopper members provided in the playing apparatus (see description page 13, lines 22-27). On the other hand the corresponding parts 205a and 205b in Fig. 31 are presented as "magnetic tape height restricting ribs", whatever this term may mean. This constitutes a lack of clarity and, since claim 21 explicitly refers to this "tape height restricting rib", this lack of clarity equally affects claim 21. As a result, no meaningful assessment on novelty and inventive step can be made to claim 21.

Furthermore, since claim 9 contains the same features (as a dependent claim appended to claim 1) the lack of clarity equally applies to claim 9 and the claims directly referring back to it (claims 10 and 11).

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EIKOH PATENT OFFICE**PATENT COOPERATION TREATY****PCT****NOTIFICATION CONCERNING
SUBMISSION OR TRANSMITTAL
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(PCT Administrative Instructions, Section 411)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

HAGINO, Taira
 Eikoh Patent Office
 ARK Mori Building, 28th floor
 12-32, Akasaka 1-chome
 Minato-ku
 Tokyo 100-6028
 JAPON

Date of mailing (day/month/year) 16 August 1999 (16.08.99)	
Applicant's or agent's file reference P-31609	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
International application No. PCT/JP99/03120	International filing date (day/month/year) 11 June 1999 (11.06.99)
International publication date (day/month/year) Not yet published	Priority date (day/month/year) 12 June 1998 (12.06.98)
Applicant FUJI PHOTO FILM CO., LTD. et al	

1. The applicant is hereby notified of the date of receipt (except where the letters "NR" appear in the right-hand column) by the International Bureau of the priority document(s) relating to the earlier application(s) indicated below. Unless otherwise indicated by an asterisk appearing next to a date of receipt, or by the letters "NR", in the right-hand column, the priority document concerned was submitted or transmitted to the International Bureau in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b).
2. This updates and replaces any previously issued notification concerning submission or transmittal of priority documents.
3. An asterisk(*) appearing next to a date of receipt, in the right-hand column, denotes a priority document submitted or transmitted to the International Bureau but not in compliance with Rule 17.1(a) or (b). In such a case, the attention of the applicant is directed to Rule 17.1(c) which provides that no designated Office may disregard the priority claim concerned before giving the applicant an opportunity, upon entry into the national phase, to furnish the priority document within a time limit which is reasonable under the circumstances.
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<u>Priority date</u>	<u>Priority application No.</u>	<u>Country or regional Office or PCT receiving Office</u>	<u>Date of receipt of priority document</u>
12 June 1998 (12.06.98)	10/165503	JP	30 July 1999 (30.07.99)
17 June 1998 (17.06.98)	10/170196	JP	30 July 1999 (30.07.99)
23 June 1998 (23.06.98)	10/176263	JP	30 July 1999 (30.07.99)
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			(81) Designated States: CN, KR, US, European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).
(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): FUJI PHOTO FILM CO., LTD. [JP/JP]; 210, Nakanuma, Minami-Ashigara-shi, Kanagawa 250-0123 (JP).		Published <i>With international search report.</i>	
(72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): ASHIKAWA, Teruo [JP/JP]; Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd., 12-1, Ogicho 2-chome, Odawara-shi, Kanagawa 250-0001 (JP). ONMORI, Shozo [JP/JP]; Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd., 12-1, Ogicho 2-chome, Odawara-shi, Kanagawa 250-0001 (JP). HIRAGUCHI, Kazuo [JP/JP]; Fuji Photo Film Co., Ltd., 12-1, Ogi-		(88) Date of publication of the international search report: 2 March 2000 (02.03.00)	
(54) Title: MAGNETIC TAPE CASSETTE AND TAPE REEL			
(57) Abstract <p>The magnetic tape cassette comprises a lid for covering magnetic tape in a freely opening and closing manner, a lid lock for locking the lid in its closed state, and a lid spring (71) not only for energizing the lid lock in its locking direction but also for energizing the lid in its closing direction. The lid spring (71) is structured such that a coil portion (71c) thereof is mounted on a support shaft pin (61a) of the side plate (55a) of an outer lid (51) in a loose fit manner, one leg portion (71a) thereof is secured to a projection portion (65) provided on the side plate (55a), and the other leg portion (71b) thereof is secured to a projection (6) provided on the side surface of an upper half (2) and can be engaged with the lid lock from the upper half (2) side to thereby energize the lid lock in the locking direction of the lid. On the upper half (2), there is provided position restrict means (5) which can be contacted with the coil portion (71c) of the lid spring (71) to thereby restrict the position of the coil portion (71c). Accordingly, it is possible to provide a magnetic tape cassette which can prevent the shaving of a support shaft pin caused by mutual contact between the support shaft pin and the coil portion of a lid spring.</p>			

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